

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1           1.     A double clutch assembly comprising:  
2                 an abutment assembly having an outer circumferential surface;  
3                 a first clutch assembly comprising a first pressure plate;  
4                 a first force exerting assembly which can move said first pressure plate  
5 toward said abutment assembly;  
6                 a second clutch assembly comprising a second pressure plate;  
7                 a second force exerting assembly which can move said second pressure  
8 plate toward said abutment assembly;  
9                 a connecting plate assembly for connecting the abutment assembly to a  
10 drive element, said connecting plate assembly having a radially outer first connecting  
11 section extending over said outer circumferential surface; and  
12                 a plurality of connecting elements connecting said first connecting section  
13 to said outer circumferential surface.

1           2.     A double clutch assembly as in claim 1 wherein said connecting  
2 assembly comprises an integrally formed starter ring gear, said first connecting section  
3 extending axially from said ring gear.

1           3.     A double clutch assembly as in claim 1 wherein said connecting  
2 plate assembly comprises:  
3                 a radially outer part having said first connecting section;

4 a radially inner part having a second connecting section which can be  
5 connected to said drive element; and  
6 an elastic connecting assembly connecting said radially inner part to said  
7 radially outer part to permit relative rotational movement.

1 4. A double clutch assembly comprising:  
2 an abutment assembly;  
3 a first clutch assembly comprising a first pressure plate;  
4 a first force exerting assembly which can move said first pressure plate  
5 toward said abutment assembly;  
6 a second clutch assembly comprising a second pressure plate;  
7 a second force exerting assembly which can move said second pressure  
8 plate toward said abutment assembly;  
9 a connecting plate assembly for connecting the abutment assembly to a  
10 drive element, said connecting plate assembly comprising a radially outer first  
11 connecting section which extends axially;  
12 an axial projection formation on said abutment assembly, at least part of  
13 said axial projection section axially overlapping said first connecting section of said  
14 connecting plate assembly; and  
15 a plurality of connecting elements fixing said first connecting section to  
16 said axial projecting section for rotation in common.

1           5.     A double clutch assembly as in claim 4 wherein said axial  
2 projection formation lies radially outside of said first connecting section.

1           6.     A double clutch assembly as in claim 4 wherein said connecting  
2 plate assembly comprises:  
3               a radially outer part having said first connecting section;  
4               a radially inner part having a second connecting section which can be  
5 connected to said drive element; and  
6               an elastic connecting assembly connecting said radially inner part to said  
7 radially outer part to permit relative rotational movement.

1           7.     A double clutch assembly comprising:  
2               an abutment assembly having a radially outer area;  
3               a first clutch assembly comprising a first pressure plate;  
4               a first force exerting assembly which can move said first pressure plate  
5 toward said abutment assembly;  
6               a second clutch assembly comprising a second pressure plate;  
7               a second force exerting assembly which can move said second pressure  
8 plate toward said abutment assembly;  
9               a connecting assembly for connecting the abutment assembly to a drive  
10 element, said connecting assembly comprising an intermediate connecting ring and a  
11 connecting plate assembly having a radially outer first connecting section;

12                   a plurality of first connecting elements fastening said intermediate  
13 connecting ring to said radially outer area of said abutment assembly; and  
14                   a plurality of second connecting elements fastening said first connecting  
15 section to said intermediate connecting ring.

1                   8.     A double clutch assembly as in claim 7 further comprising a starter  
2 ring gear formed on said intermediate connecting ring.

1                   9.     A double clutch assembly as in claim 7 wherein at least some of  
2 said first connecting elements and at least some of said second connecting elements  
3 are threaded bolts, said intermediate connecting element comprising threaded holes,  
4 each of said threaded holes receiving both a first connecting element and a second  
5 connecting element.

1                   10.    A double clutch assembly as in claim 9 wherein said intermediate  
2 connecting ring is a formed metal plate.

1                   11.    A double clutch assembly as in claim 7 wherein said first  
2 connecting section extends essentially radially.

1                   12.    A double clutch assembly as in claim 7 wherein said connecting  
2 plate assembly comprises:

3                   a radially outer part having said first connecting section;

4                   a radially inner part having a second connecting section which can be  
5 connected to said drive element; and

6 an elastic connecting assembly connecting said radially inner part to said  
7 radially outer part to permit relative rotational movement.

1 13. A double clutch assembly comprising:  
2 an abutment assembly having a radially outer area;  
3 a first clutch assembly comprising a first pressure plate;  
4 a first force exerting assembly which can move said first pressure plate  
5 toward said abutment assembly;  
6 a second clutch assembly comprising a second pressure plate;  
7 a second force exerting assembly which can move said second pressure  
8 plate toward said abutment assembly;

9 a connecting plate assembly for connecting the abutment assembly to a  
10 drive element, said connecting plate assembly having a radially outer first connecting  
11 section extending essentially radially; and  
12 a plurality of connecting elements fastening said first connecting section to  
13 said radially outer area of said abutment assembly for rotation in common.

1 14. A double clutch assembly as in claim 13 wherein said abutment  
2 section has tapered fastening holes, at least some of said connecting elements having  
3 tapered fastening sections which are received in said tapered fastening holes in an  
4 interference fit.

1           15.    A double clutch assembly as in claim 13 wherein at least some of  
2   said connecting elements have tapered fastening sections which pass through the first  
3   connecting section.

1           16.    A double clutch assembly as in claim 13 wherein at least some of  
2   said connecting elements have cylindrical sections which pass through the first  
3   connecting section.

1           17.    A double clutch assembly as in claim 13 wherein said connecting  
2   plate assembly comprises:  
3               a radially outer part having said first connecting section;  
4               a radially inner part having a second connecting section which can be  
5   connected to said drive element; and  
6               an elastic connecting assembly connecting said radially inner part to said  
7   radially outer part to permit relative rotational movement.

1           18.    A double clutch assembly comprising:  
2               an abutment assembly having a set of teeth;  
3               a first clutch assembly comprising a first pressure plate;  
4               a first force exerting assembly which can move said first pressure plate  
5   toward said abutment assembly;  
6               a second clutch assembly comprising a second pressure plate;  
7               a second force exerting assembly which can move said second pressure  
8   plate toward said abutment assembly;

9 a connecting plate assembly for connecting the abutment assembly to a  
10 drive element, said connecting plate assembly having a radially outer first connecting  
11 section with a set of teeth which engage said teeth on said abutment assembly for  
12 rotation in common.

1 19. A double clutch assembly as in claim 18 wherein said teeth on said  
2 first connecting section engage said teeth on said abutment assembly under pretension.

1 20. A double clutch assembly as in claim 18 wherein said teeth on said  
2 first connecting section have tapered ends which engage in correspondingly tapered  
3 gaps between said teeth on said abutment assembly.

1 21. A double clutch assembly as in claim 18 wherein said connecting  
2 plate assembly comprises:  
3 a radially outer part having said first connecting section;  
4 a radially inner part having a second connecting section which can be  
5 connected to said drive element; and  
6 an elastic connecting assembly connecting said radially inner part to said  
7 radially outer part to permit relative rotational movement.